

Mission:

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



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Vision: To be the Healthiest State in the Nation

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Gulf County Teens Tell Big Tobacco: I am Not a "Replacement"

They're Spreading Their Message for Kick Butts Day on Wednesday, March 19

Gulf County, Fla. – The tobacco industry is losing customers. Not only are more smokers quitting, every day, an estimated 1,315 people in the United States die because of smoking.¹

In response, the tobacco industry targets a new generation of potential nicotine addicts, which they call "replacement smokers." A 1984 internal document from R.J. Reynolds', the makers of Camel, stated: "Younger adult smokers are the only source of replacement smokers... If younger adults turn away from smoking, the industry must decline, just as a population which does not give birth will eventually dwindle."²

This Kick Butts Day, Gulf County's Students Working Against Tobacco (SWAT) are speaking up and taking action to let Big Tobacco know they will be not replacements. Kick Butts Day, on March 19, is the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids national day of activism that empowers youth to fight back against Big Tobacco.

The Gulf County SWAT Chapter will be observing Kick Butts Day with organized activities in the Gulf County Schools and around the community on Thursday March 13 through March 19.

For each smoking-related death, at least two youth or young adults become regular smokers each day.³ These young people rarely consider the long-term health consequences of smoking when they start. Because of nicotine, a highly addictive drug, three out of four youth continue smoking well into adulthood, often with serious and even deadly consequences.⁴ In fact, about half of long-term smokers will die prematurely from smoking-related causes.⁵

"Youth have always been a target for the tobacco industry," said Tobacco Free Florida Bureau Chief Shannon Hughes. "Numerous internal tobacco industry documents reveal that the tobacco companies perceived young people as an important target. They developed products, like flavored tobacco, and marketing campaigns aimed at teens."

The fact is that nine out of 10 smokers start by age 18.⁶ If current smoking rates continue, 5.6 million U.S. children alive today who are younger than 18 years of age will die prematurely as a result of smoking.⁷

ABOUT KICK BUTTS DAY

Kick Butts Day is a national day of activism that empowers youth to stand out, speak up and seize control against Big Tobacco. Kick Butts Day is organized by the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids and sponsored by the United Health Foundation. The first Kick Butts Day was held in 1996.

ABOUT TOBACCO FREE FLORIDA

DOH's Tobacco Free Florida campaign is a statewide cessation and prevention campaign funded by Florida's tobacco settlement fund.

Tobacco users interested in quitting are encouraged to use one of the state's three ways to quit. To learn about Tobacco Free Florida and the state's free quit resources, visit www.tobaccofreeflorida.com or follow the campaign on Facebook at www.facebook.com/TobaccoFreeFlorida or Twitter at www.twitter.com/tobaccofreefla.

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¹ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The Health Consequences of Smoking —50 Years of Progress: A Report of the Surgeon General. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2014

² R.J. Reynolds report, "Younger Adult Smokers: Strategies and Opportunities." February 29, 1984 .Bates No. 501928462-8550

³ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The Health Consequences of Smoking —50 Years of Progress: A Report of the Surgeon General. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2014

⁴ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Preventing Tobacco Use Among Youth and Young Adults: A Report of the Surgeon General. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2012.

⁵ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Preventing Tobacco Use Among Youth and Young Adults: A Report of the Surgeon General. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2012.

⁶ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Preventing Tobacco Use Among Youth and Young Adults: A Report of the Surgeon General. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2012.

⁷ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The Health Consequences of Smoking —50 Years of Progress: A Report of the Surgeon General. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2014.